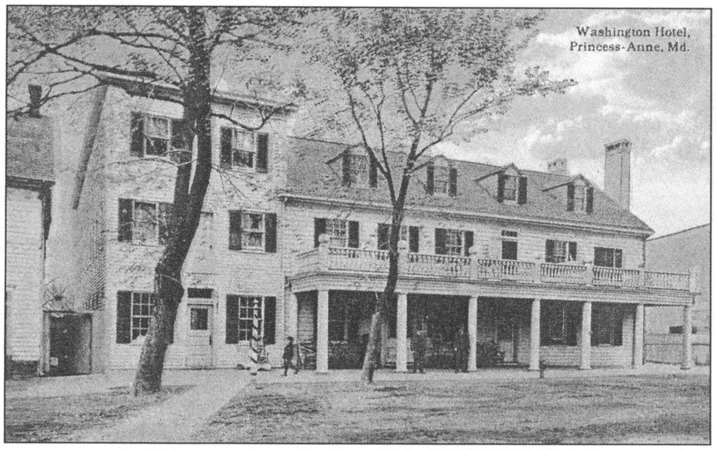
Salisbury University Nabb Research Center Since 1982 for Delmarva History and Culture
We're History...Without You!

Shoreline

Vol. 19 • November 2012
For the Members of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University

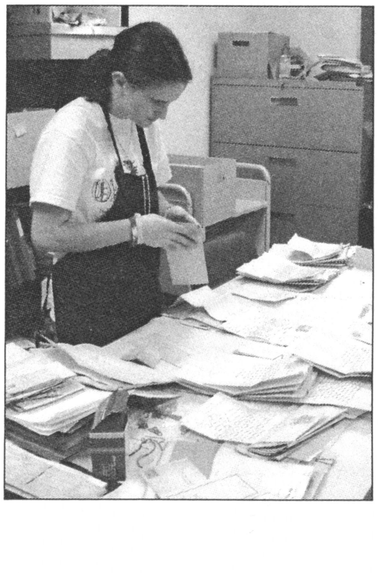
The Washington Hotel

By Julie Messick



At the end of July this year, Dr. Ray Thompson arrived at the Nabb Research Center with his truck full of materials he had brought from the Washington Hotel in Princess Anne, MD. At first glance, we could see there were ledgers, sheet music and a box of correspondence. Most of the items were covered in dust and dirt; some of the ledgers had severe water and termite damage. After much dusting, cleaning and sorting through the collection, we found there was a lot more to the collection than met the eye. The ledgers included hotel registers, the earliest one dating from December 1871 to February 1872, and the remaining 37 volumes ranging from 1906 to 1928. The sheet music ranged in date from the 1880s to the 1920s, and included songs from composers such as Irving Berlin, Stephen Foster and John Phillip Sousa. Also what we thought at first was just sheet music was instead a run of a musical magazine, *The Etude*, ranging from 1901 to 1927.

The box of miscellaneous documents turned out to be so much more than just correspondence. A wide variety of documents pertaining to the hotel – such as receipts, correspondence, solicitations to the hotel, menus and check stubs – were included. Also there were documents relating to the town of Princess Anne. After doing some investigation, I discovered that the proprietor of the hotel during the time these materials were dated was John Douglass Wallop. He was also president of the Town Commissioners of Princess Anne, a position that functioned as the mayor. Among the trove of records were documents relating to building an electric light plant to run the streetlights on electricity in 1914, bids for a new water plant and sewers in 1913, and many other public works projects, such as buying oyster shells for the streets. There were also letters and receipts relating to other businesses in the town.

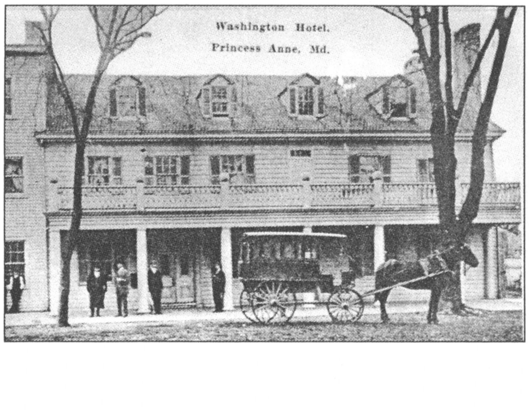


Further research led to the discovery that the lot on which the Washington Hotel sits has had an inn on it since at least 1751. The lot was transferred to several different people over the years, including John Bell, who was the original owner, then to Henry Waggaman, John Done, Zadak Long, Henry E.L. Morris, William Rider, William J. Leonard and then finally J.D. Wallop.

John Wallop acquired the Washington Hotel in 1908 and ran it until 1935 when it transferred to his son J.D. Wallop Jr., who sold it a few years later. [An interesting fact I discovered while researching this family was that John Wallop's grandson, John Douglass Wallop III – or Douglass Wallop, as he is more commonly known – wrote *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant* in 1954, which was adapted by Wallop and George Abbot to be turned into the Broadway musical *Damn Yankees*.] Included in the collection were a few checks that John Wallop wrote to his grandson the year he was born, starting a savings account for him. Also, John Wallop owned another hotel in Ocean City during the same time he was proprietor at the Washington Hotel in Princess Anne. He ran the Colonial Hotel at 1st and 2nd streets in Ocean City from 1911 to at least 1913.

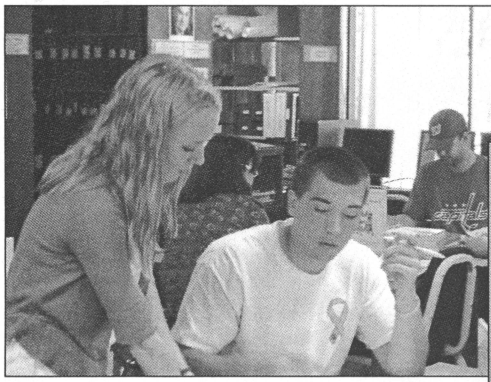
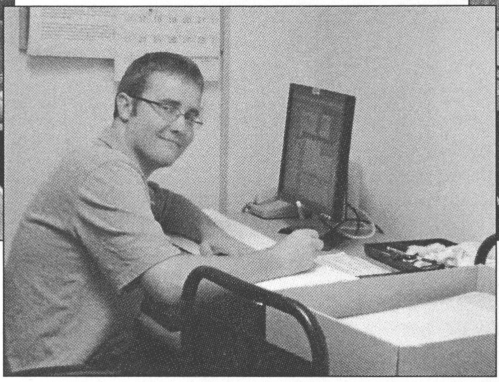
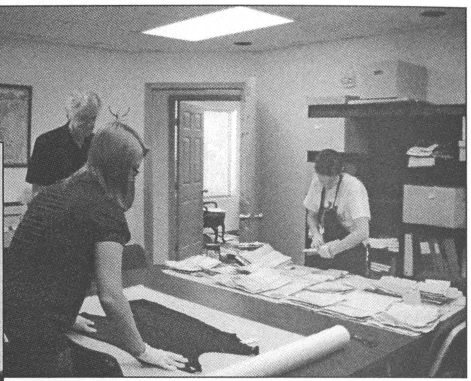
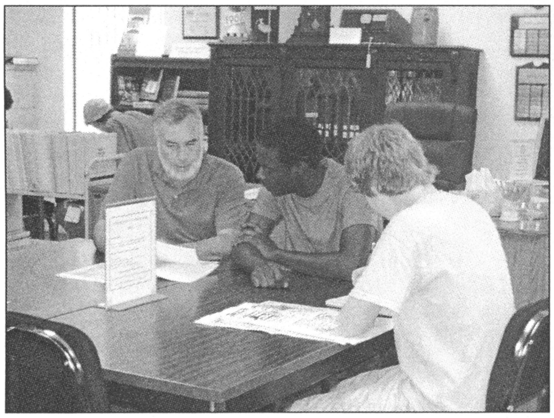
After John Wallop transferred ownership of the Washington Hotel to his son, it was then sold to Leonard and Daisy Shrives. They ran it until 1956 when it transferred to Robert and Mary Murphey. The hotel has remained in the Murphey family as their son Robert and his wife Cheryl have been running it since 1978. A group of people are at present planning on purchasing the hotel and restoring its historical character. They estimate the restoration will take a year to complete and plan on restoring some of the bedrooms and also completing some necessary repairs to the building.

What started out as just a routine call to pick up a donation became a trove of information telling not only the story of the Washington Hotel, but also of the town of Princess Anne and its development in the early 20th century.



Fall Semester at the Nabb Research Center

As each new semester starts, new projects and old await our staff, student workers and interns. Each day sees us engaged in a variety of activities – from setting up our rooms to accommodate specific classes and lectures to polishing silver to properly housing antique textiles. Material donations acquired since last semester number 60 and still counting – and can include anything from one book to one pick-up truck full! Graduate and undergraduate student workers and interns from various disciplines are pictured here processing archival materials, preparing for upcoming outreach events, researching articles for the *Shoreline* and assisting other students researching topics for their class projects. Director Ray Thompson, Archivist David Ranzan and other staff help direct their activities and ensure that the students receive practical work experiences. Each semester, Salisbury University faculty members bring classes to the Nabb Center to acquaint students with the vast resources available here and to provide hands-on research experiences. African-American Literature, World Civilizations, U.S. history courses, ProSeminar in History, Public History and Methods of Historical Research were some of the classes meeting and researching at the Nabb Center during the first six weeks of this semester.

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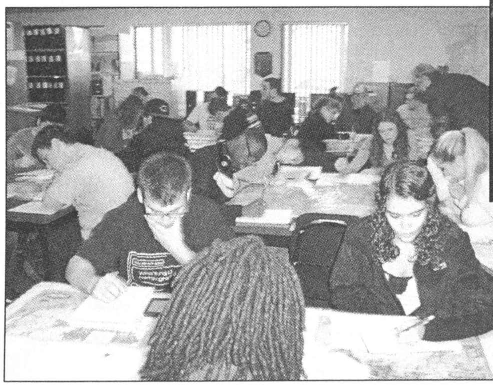
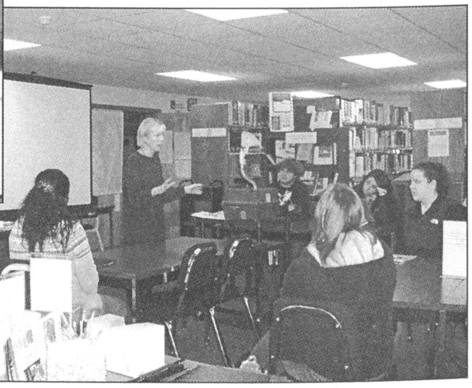
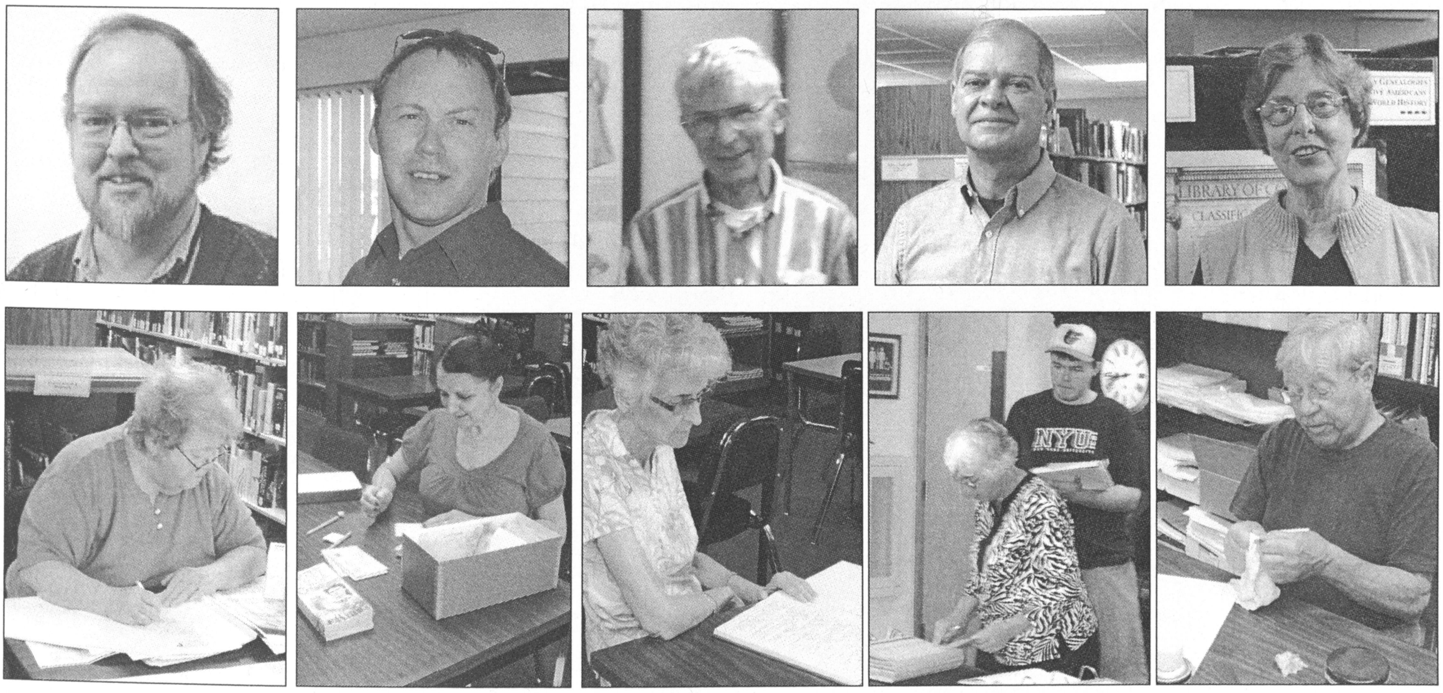



Public events this fall have included several lectures attended by both community members and students along with two concurrent exhibits. Daily visitors include local and long-distance researchers. Special recognition goes to the community volunteers who help in whatever tasks need doing – exhibit docent, assisting researchers, processing archival and artifact collections and many more. Thanks to you, our members, for providing us the support we need to preserve and celebrate our local history and to train the next generation of history-lovers.



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Exhibits and Events - Fall 2012

Nabb Center Gallery exhibit hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 1-4 p.m. or by appointment (410-543-6312).

Delmarva History Series: Delaware and the Civil War Part 2 with Stan Williams, Lecture, Thursday, November 15 • 7 p.m., Nabb Center Gallery

Delaware was caught in the full fury of America's unfolding historic drama between the years 1861 to 1865. The war tore apart friends, townships and even families within the first state. Delaware saw its share of Confederate spies, rebel raiders and Southern sympathizers, along with incredible acts of courage, both on the battlefield and at sea.

Main Street Salisbury Exhibit
Through December 14, MWF 1-4 p.m. • Nabb Center Gallery

Explore the turn-of-the-20th century business district of Salisbury, MD. Utilizing audiovisual technology, artifacts and photographs from Nabb Center archives, this exhibit could represent many Delmarva towns of the period.

When Freedom Seemed as Endless as the Marsh: Shantyboats and Gunning Clubs Exhibit
Through December 14, MWF 1-4 p.m. • Nabb Center Gallery

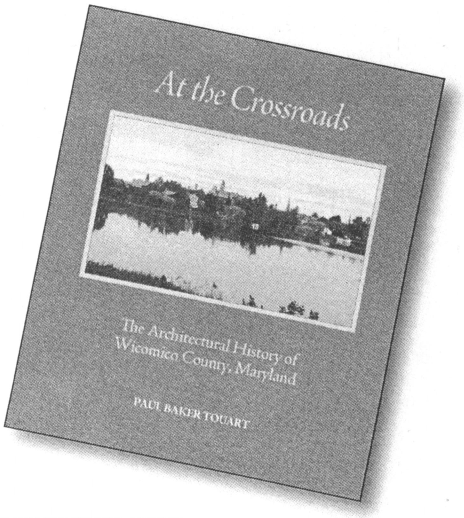
Historic images depict the evolution of the shanty boat to a land-based club, the eventual lessening of waterfowl numbers and the demise of shanty boats and gunning clubs.

At the Crossroads: The Architectural History of Wicomico County, Maryland

The foremost source on local history and architecture in Wicomico County. A must-have for everyone's library. Perfect for holiday gift-giving.

Now $25 ($50 value hardback 641pp) plus $10 shipping, Maryland residents add $1.50 tax

Make check payable to: Salisbury University Foundation, Inc.

Mail to: Nabb Research Center
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